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THE NATURE AND DEFINITION OF RELIGION

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To attempt in these days a definition of religion may seem like taking a wanton risk of intellectual confusion. Even a rough classification of religions is difficult. The mass of data is so vast, the varieties of religion so manifold, that no sooner has a scheme of classification established itself than it begins to sag under the weight of material thrown upon it. The old schemes which hinged on a fixed distinction between the religion of the Bible and all religions outside the pale of Biblical revelation, succeeded by dint of excluding a large part of the phenomena. But, as things are with us, no classification is better than a working hypothesis into which, as a constituent element, enters the knowledge of its own mortality.

If classification is difficult, definition would seem to be perilous. Its chances of success turn largely on its narrowness. And by narrowness it pleads guilty to a mishandling of the facts involved, sacrificing thoroughness to clearness. The student of religion, in case he has a grudge to fatten, might almost say, "Oh that mine enemy would publish a definition!"

Yet the mass of data which render definition perilous also make it necessary. The definition may be imperfect; still, it is a help to clearer thinking. And every attempt at definition presupposes a straight question brought to bear, with varying degrees of precision, on the phenomena which at the same moment invite and resist analysis.

In our day the need of definition is imperious. A rapidly

increasing body of facts, gathered from the four corners of the world, is being pressed on our attention. If one has any real speculative interest in religion as a factor in the world's life, and if he desires to be an intelligent reader, then, no matter how vehemently he may disclaim any attempt at a science of religion, he must have a provisional definition to give direction to his reading. Otherwise, he will surely fall a victim to a series of impressions, more or less vivid, but lacking continuity.

Apart from the need personal to us as intelligent readers is the larger need of our generation. The definitions which we have inherited sprang from times of transition and crisis. One set belongs to the period that witnessed the establishment of Christianity in the Mediterranean world. The local, ancestral religions had broken down and defaulted. The times demanded a universal religion. Greek philosophy compelled earnest men to reflect on the nature of religion as a whole, and the result was a set of definitions.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries similar causes have produced similar results, though they are on a much larger scale. Dogma has lost its grip on reason. Authority has let slip its hold on the will. The religious consciousness has broken away from its own past. The rise of the modern state and the exploration of the universe have put forward objects of interest which lay claim to the full attention of earnest people. At the same time all parts of the earth have come into touch with one another, and, since the lines of distinction between the religion of the Bible and all other religions are no longer clear and convincing, the great debate of the world's religions has for the first time in history honestly begun. Now if one is to enter that debate with any hope of a sincere and effective give-and-take, he must have a working definition. Define, then, the student must,—even though, as under a certain law in ancient Athens, he makes the attempt with a rope round his neck.

The title chosen for this paper is of some significance, at least for the writer. Should it read the "essence" or the "nature" of religion? In strict logic, there is no distinction between the terms. But logic and usage have different standards. Books like Harnack's *Essence of Christianity* suggest that the term "essence"

is more objective than "nature," and that it has, moreover, a stronger tendency to raise questions regarding the metaphysical or historical contents of this or that religious view of the universe. The word "nature," on the other hand, is more subjective, and has a stronger tendency towards questions such as: How does the religious element within consciousness differ from the other elements which enter into it? how is the religious element related to the other elements? and what is the taste it leaves in the mouth? So the best working title is "The Nature and Definition of Religion."

In searching for a definition, our method is prescribed to us by the nature of the subject. Not in the experience of the individual but in the experience of the race are we to conduct our investigation. For in no field is Cicero's "*unus homo nullus homo*" quite so plain as in the fields of religion. We must, therefore, seek our end in the history of religion; and the history must be taken in its totality. Fetichism belongs to it no less than the highest form of the Christian consciousness. No other method is safe. More than one of the definitions which have been put forward, while springing from the depths of an individual need or even from the need of a generation of men, have missed the mark by reason of the restricted area of feeling and tendency which they include. A definition inspired by the needs of a particular age or a particular circle, however vital and impassioned it may be, is in danger of forgetting a great deal that needs to be remembered. The excluding power of passion is in proportion to its intensity.

The danger is at its height in the case of the modern student, deeply self-conscious, more or less widely detached from some things which the man who lived deep in antiquity would have set down as vitally important. Just once in history has an individual appeared who acted as though he were the "author of himself," knowing "no other kin"; and that was in the eighteenth century. It is true that the eighteenth-century individual no longer has credit. Indeed, so far as appearances go, he is dead and buried. But a period so extraordinary is deeply symptomatic, leaving behind it influences that strongly mould thought long after its public credit has vanished.

We may safely venture to say that there are three questions, and three alone, that have vitally interested all sorts and conditions of men from the beginning of historic time. These are the food question, the sex question, and the religious question. Other things, such as culture, philosophy, science, and art, have been the specialties of one or another class of men, of this or that period of history, of such and such parts of the earth. But these three questions have touched the race always and everywhere, and touched it to the quick.

Therefore the contemporary individual is in danger of overweighting certain elements in his own consciousness, while underweighting elements which at another time and place may be of prime importance. "More water floweth by the mill than wots the miller of." The student must ally himself closely to the ancients. For it is evident that universal history believes in the division of labor on a vast scale. Antiquity did the pioneer's work that has made history possible. The State was founded; civilization was achieved. And the work done by religion in this field is essential to a clear insight into the nature of religion as an historical force. The result is that antiquity, where religion operated under conditions extremely unlike the specializing conditions of our time, is most important in any large consideration of our subject. It is a well-known law in psychological study that close attention to the phenomena of one's own inner consciousness is apt to dissipate the phenomena under investigation. One must catch himself off guard, peep through the keyhole at himself, above all must see himself writ large in society and history, in order to know to the fullest extent the fact or tendency in question. Even so is it in the field of religion. The modern must guard himself against the risk of excluding from consideration things which may not be apprehended by the reflective individual as needful and yet to the nation and the race have primary worth and supreme significance.

Before we study the history of religion at large, it seems advisable to review briefly both the definitions which we have inherited and the ones now current. The review may prepare us for deeper insight into history.

The first group of definitions was published in the Roman

empire, being in connection with the destruction of the old religion and the spread and triumph of the new. Speaking roughly, two causes worked together in the process of destruction. The first was the widening polity of the ancient world. Many nations were dragged inside one pale. Local religions, incompetent to handle the widening and deepening relationships of humanity, fell into discredit. The enlargement of social obligations called for a larger conception of life and of its unseen foundations. The second cause was philosophical criticism upon inherited customs and convictions. But philosophy itself was eventually sucked into a stream of tendency which ended by making necessary a view of things flushed with the passion and primary feeling that philosophy by itself could not supply.

First in order of time is the view of Lucretius, which so deeply influenced later thought, and which is compactly expressed in the often-quoted words of Petronius (Fragm. xxvii, 1 B), "*Primus in orbe timor fecit deos.*" One striking illustration of its influence is found in Virgil's lines (Georg. ii, 490 ff.):

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

Lucretius built his conception of religion on Epicurus. In its first meaning it applies mainly to the individual, and it was in that sense that Lucretius designed it. The object of philosophy is deliverance from the fears and terrors which beset and besiege the soul of the uncultivated man, driving him into the open arms of superstition. But, as Hobbes showed long ago and as Professor Palmer has recently suggested (in *The Field of Ethics*), Lucretius' conception has a wider meaning than he was clearly aware of. Beyond all question there is a profound truth in it. A quotation from Hume, discussing the origin of religion, is in point:

We hang in perpetual suspense between life and death, health and sickness, plenty and want, which are distributed amongst the human species by secret and unknown causes, whose operation is oft unexpected and always unaccountable. These *unknown causes*, then, become the constant object of our hope and fear; and, while the passions are kept in perpetual alarm by our anxious expectation

of events, the imagination is equally employed in forming ideas of those powers on which we have so entire dependence.

In antiquity, before philosophy and science had shaped the conception of the universe as an organism of law, religion was the sole sanctuary from the fears that besiege consciousness on every side. Religion, and religion alone, could overcome the terrors of the unknown. At this point the religious history of Babylonia is profoundly significant. Here was shaped that system of augury which enabled the ancient world to find helpful meaning in the happenings of life. Here, too, on a higher plane than augury, was elaborated and published that body of knowledge and fancy which we call primitive astronomy or astrology, whose aim was to give men foresight of the future, thus robbing it of its power to terrorize consciousness. In one sense or another Lucretius' idea is deeply true. Ancient religion is inseparable from the beginnings of civilization, and not merely from its beginnings but from some of its most considerable achievements. From one point of view civilization is a system of insurance on a vast scale. And the function of religion, as an organic part of antiquity, was to insure men against the perils and dread of the unknown. Lucretius himself stood in a contemptuous attitude toward religion. He was playing for his own hand, seeking the individual's peace of mind. He did not undertake to explain the moral foundations of states and the ultimate grounds of political obligation. But his words go deeper and wider than his intention. Not only was it true in the beginnings of the religious consciousness that fear largely controlled and shaped the course of religious feeling. It is still true. The relation between the known and the unknown tracts of being and meaning is the ultimate spring of abiding religion.

Yet the definition, when put forward as final and exclusive, is seen to be impossible. A larger experience, a widening conscious relation with the nature of things, discloses the fact that in the course of history fear ceases to be the prime motive of religious action and becomes the medium, or a part of the medium, through which the ultimate reality makes itself known to men.

Next in order of time is Cicero's definition (*De natura deorum*,

ii, 28): "Religion (*relegere*) is the art of collecting the deeper meanings out of multitudinous religious customs." The words themselves are on the surface of the subject. But in fairness to Cicero we must put them in the context of his life. He was an eclectic, and his eclecticism suggested an etymology which is practically impossible. But a man's etymologies are not the measure of his truths. Behind Cicero's eclecticism stood philosophical monotheism with its inspiring ideals of self-knowledge and of the unity and coherence of all knowledge in the idea of God. Thus taken, in its suggestion rather than in its mistaken etymological sense, the definition contains an element of value. Like the view of Lucretius, the suggestion goes deeper than the words, and points toward the Aristotelian and Kantian doctrine of the saving unity of thought in its relation to the unity of God. It deserves more consideration than recent students have condescended to give it. But a glance at the history of religion is enough to cashier it, if it attempts to become anything more than a constituent element within a larger total.

Last in order of time, but most significant of all the ancient definitions, is the one given by Lactantius (*Inst.* iv, 28). Criticising Cicero's definition he says: "The name of religion is derived from the bond (*religare*) of piety, because God has *tied* man to himself and *bound* him by piety, for we must serve him as a master, and be obedient to him as a father." Lactantius' etymology is probably correct. But etymological correctness is a small part of the value in the definition, which goes very deep indeed into the nature of religion both in the ancient and the modern worlds. Let the student read Plutarch's lives of Lyscurgus and Numa, Fustel de Coulanges' *Ancient City*, and Wissowa's *Religion und Cultus der Römer*. Let him in connection therewith study the use of the Old Testament canon, considering it under the aspect of law. He shall then see how near Lactantius comes to the deepest meaning of religion in antiquity. Now, as has been said, the modern student must take antiquity's teaching deeply to heart. Thanks to our distinction between church and state and the resultant division of labor, we are poorly equipped for insight into the part played by religion in founding and developing the state. It is not until one has reflected on the grounds

of civic obligation, and has carried that question into its contemporary position inside the "social question," that he is in a condition to pass judgment on the definition of Lactantius. And it is a serious criticism on the moderns that they have so lightly passed it by. For example, Hagenbach (*Theologische Encyclopädie*, § 12) carelessly dismisses it with two lines of fine print.

The explanation of this cursory treatment is found in the personal equation of the moderns. Along with the distinction between church and state go tendencies of culture which mark off a certain tract of experience as the only territory over which religious judgments run, while outside lies a widening tract within which religion consciously lays its hand on its mouth. Authoritative in one clearly defined field, in an adjacent field it lacks even the right of speech.

Each of the definitions thus far considered is suggestive. Two of them are extremely valuable. And all three lie close to that period in the history of the race wherein religion has done, so far, its greatest work. We moderns should not take ourselves too seriously. Particularly should we be on our guard against contemporaneity. It may be that ahead of us lies a constructive period in religion for which the critical work of our time is a preliminary. We must have a care lest the distinctions of function which we have achieved at so great a cost, and which are proportionately dear to us, shall lead us to separate things which prove to be more deeply related the more clearly they are distinguished.

We now turn to a set of definitions having a very different color. To prepare ourselves to understand them, we must take careful account of the conditions under which they have taken shape. First, then, let us go back to the eighteenth century, out of which we have been digged. Something quite foreign to antiquity now appears. In the recoil from the dogma of infallibility in all its power, the rejection of religion is put on higher grounds than those on which the ancient skeptics stood. It is in the interest of the state, in the interest of a higher moral law, in order to draw attention away from the world beyond and to fix it on the world of citizenship, that religious authority is so passionately rejected. As a consequence, religion is subjected to

a far more persistent and searching examination than it has ever received before.

Secondly, the individual and his rights become the all-absorbing theme. In antiquity the individual hardly existed. Even in Greece philosophy was largely the affair of a circle or a school, a kind of philosophic family. But in the modern period the individual in full armor leaps into the lists. Religion, if he concerns himself with it at all, is a highly personal affair. Now with the great gains accruing from this position both to vital religion and social morality we are not here concerned. It is the results of the position and mental action of this well-nigh elaborately self-conscious individual, when he sets himself to defining religion, that concern us. And it is easily seen that the situation is almost antipodal to that of antiquity.

Thirdly, science not only takes on a form which throws the achievements of the ancients into the shade, but—what is much more to our purpose—science becomes popular, profoundly affecting the common consciousness. This democratic aspect of science finds almost no analogy in the Mediterranean world, where science was the prerogative of a very small circle, having no popular spread worth speaking of.

Fourthly, in connection with science stands the immensely important idea of evolution, in so far as it bears on ethics and upon systems of idealism. Darwin, in his study of earth-worms, says that mental inability to appreciate the prodigious effects of small causes persistently working over a wide tract of time is the greatest obstacle in the way of scientific advancement. We may apply his thought to the study of idealism in its history and in its methods. Thanks to the idea of evolution, the idealizing man can keep his footing on the earth under a strain that would either have broken down his idealizing kinsman in antiquity (debasement into a worldling) or else, in the fear of moral bankruptcy, have driven him into open and confessed religion. The modern idealist, on the contrary, filled with his great conception of orderly progress and content with small gains slowly but steadily accumulating, is less apt to fall into the conscious need of religion.

Finally, the modern nation has come on the field. In antiquity

church and state were identified. For many centuries after the break-down of ancient culture and law the church was supreme over the state. Now the state is supreme. And however great may be the amount of actual and potential religion within the state, yet there is here in view a wide field of idealizing activities more or less distinct, even if not separated, from the consciously and deliberately religious method for insuring the ideal interests of society.

The upshot of all the distinctively modern conditions is that religion can be held aloof from the nobler and more earnest spirits to a degree impossible in the ancient world. And along with this is given the possibility both of a far more restricted area of feeling for religion to cover and of a more searching analysis of the individual's conscious relation to it.

The first of the modern definitions in the order of time is that of Kant. It stands in connection with his position in the history of philosophy. His function therein was to grasp clearly the scientific conception of the universe on the one hand, and on the other to assert the principle of moral freedom. One can understand him only by beginning with Thales and coming up to him through Greek philosophy and the history of Christianity. When Western philosophy began its career it had no clear conception of consciousness. Mind and nature were fused. Slowly the idea of inanimate nature and a self-conscious human reason were distinguished. But the distinction came very slowly. The Stoics plainly show that, in spite of Plato and Aristotle, Mind had great difficulty in distinguishing itself from Nature. The turn of the road was made by Neoplatonism and Christianity. Here the modern idea of self-consciousness first clearly appears. But at the same time the scientific conception of the universe shaped by Alexandrian thought is practically submerged by the religious and poetical imagination, so that the full consequences of the doctrine of self-consciousness could not manifest themselves. But in Kant the two things come into direct collision. In this respect he is a deeply representative modern. The conception of self-consciousness in its originating and initiating capacity is developed with revolutionary decision and completeness. But it is no part of a mystical view of the universe. On the contrary,

the scientific view of nature is entertained in all its strength. Out of the shock and collision of these two elements comes Kant's idea of religion.

The right of religion to exist and to thrive in a world of thinking men can be made good only within the precincts of the practical reason. That is to say, the man who is a scientist with all his mental being while with all his moral and social being he believes in freedom—that is, man's ability to become what he longs to be—must, in order to keep his footing, get help from a religious view of the unseen universe, its resources and its tendencies. Pure reason cannot save him from the death-grip of cosmic necessity. The philosopher and the charcoal-burner must tread the same path. The practical reason, which we may describe in technical language as man's compelling need to take high views of his capacity and destiny and to insist upon his right to such views, whatever may be the gainsaying evidence of his senses and of nature—the practical reason takes the place of the pure reason. But the practical reason cannot continue to exist and grow strong without religion. And the essence of religion is an act of faith, or creative self-assertion, in which the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality are given to man with authoritative conviction, and through which his destiny as a moral being who is in search of the inseparable goods of virtue and happiness is made certain and secure. Religion is identical with high and efficient morality.

It is for this reason that the Kantian definition has been most widely criticised. Religion cannot be identified with morality. The poet has quite as much to say about the matter in hand as has the moralist. The artist has quite as much authority as the philosopher. The man of religion, borne on a tide of fresh and joyous emotion, refuses to shut himself up inside Kant's definition. But the bulk of criticism on Kant has gone wide of the mark. Kant's definition, like those of Lucretius and Cicero, should be taken in its drift and tendency, not confined to its literal statement and scope. Take it as meaning that religion is the means whereby man triumphantly asserts, in the face of nature, his high calling and large future, and it is profoundly true. Not only does our own experience prove it. It is proved

also by the entire history of religion. The real flaw in Kant's definition lies deeper. His unit of thought and feeling is the eighteenth-century individual. The social relations of thought hang loose upon him. The result is that his connection with the vast bulk of religious feeling that has put itself on record is vague and uncertain.

Schleiermacher is quite as typical in the religious field as is Kant in the field of philosophy. In him two elements blend. In part he is a deeply metaphysical head. In part—and here he differs from Kant—he is a man of intense and vital religious emotion. Religion with Kant is an auxiliary to morality. With Schleiermacher it is an end in itself. The pith of religion is the inrush and uprush of feeling which flushes consciousness with an eager and joyous sense of solidarity with the unseen world. In this view Schleiermacher discloses his connection with the romanticism which on the one hand revolted against the tyranny of eighteenth-century intelligibility and common sense, and on the other protested with equal vehemence against the conventional. Romantic feeling was tortured by the contrast between the world one lives in and the world one longs for. The passion for the infinite, cabined and confined within stale but invincible customs—that is the theme of romantic literature. Schleiermacher shared deeply in the movement. It gave force and edge to his temperamental capacity for emotional self-surrender to the mystery of things. At the same time he takes from Kant the depreciatory estimate of the competence of reason. Defining religion in terms of pure feeling and in clear distinction from Kant's moralizing definition on one side and from the traditional credal view on the other, he shaped that conception which has precipitated all modern tendencies towards definition and with which every student must settle his account.

“Religion is the feeling of absolute dependence upon the First Cause of life.” Two elements in the statement should be noted. First, religion is neither knowledge nor action, but feeling. Knowledge and action inevitably follow, but, abstraction being necessary for clearness, they are seen to be distinct from its essence. Historically, they are always in connection with it. Logically, they may be and must be distinguished, though not sepa-

rated. Secondly, religious feeling differs from other forms of feeling by its absoluteness. It is closely akin to aesthetic emotion and, in truth, to all those forms of primary emotion, such as patriotism, which carry a man outside himself and enable him joyously to identify himself with an order of things stretching far beyond his largest thought and purpose. But all other forms of primary emotion leave a man standing in his world with a stronger or weaker sense of freedom. Religious feeling, on the contrary, throws men at the feet of the Almighty. The consciousness of freedom is no constituent part of it. Its distinguishing quality is the sense of absolute dependence. And when it is analyzed and a theological system results, the one aim of dogmatics is to make manifest to reason God's part in the making of men.

This definition lies at the very heart of religion. That is beyond question. In contrast with Kant, Schleiermacher rightly conceives religion as the deepest source of primary and plenary emotion. It is the soul's vitalizing contact with an ultimate reality too vast for conscious thought to grasp or conscious purpose to put into specific actions. And, in opposition to the credal and intellectualistic view of faith, it rightly shifts the centre of gravity to first-hand experience. Yet the definition has some serious faults. For one thing, the term "feeling" has too many entangling alliances to be largely usable. Schleiermacher takes pains to show that knowing and doing are historically inseparable from feeling. But he does not succeed. The world of feeling is related to the world of meaning and action somewhat as, in the romantic view of things, the sense of the infinite relates itself to the actual constitution of society. The term "feeling" inevitably leads to misunderstanding and misstatement. Schleiermacher, however, insists on the term, and by his insistence lays bare a deeper flaw in his view. When he comes to systematic theology, God in his essence draws apart from God in his attributes. In other words, the essential being of God is loosely, not organically, related to the universe. The core of deity shrinks from history. Schleiermacher's idea of God is substantially one with that of the mystics from Plotinus to Boehme.

A further consequence is that the individual saint is loosely related to the spiritual community within which he has his being. This comes out in the exposition of the difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. In the former, it is affirmed, the individual's relationship to the church is mediated through his relationship to Christ, while in the latter his relationship to Christ is mediated through his relationship to the church. Now there is, of course, a considerable element of truth in the statement. But, taken as a final statement, this does not hold water. Put it alongside of the New Testament, that is, test it by the religious experience of the men who founded the Christian community, and its tendency is plainly seen. It is the reflection of an individual who has never done any creative social work of any kind. Brandes says with point (*Main Currents*, iii, p. 256): "Schleiermacher . . . is of opinion that the only hope for religion lies in surrendering all the outworks and leading it back to the inmost stronghold, the purely personal feeling of the individual." We are still within the eighteenth century. We are not wholly rid of Robinson Crusoe. Now, as a matter of fact, the religious individual cannot deeply know or master himself save in the fellowship of his peers. Relationship is as deep in him as his nature. And the God of the community reveals himself within and through the community, as being of like nature. Relationship is as deep in God as the divine being. Therefore Schleiermacher's definition, indispensable as it is to the clearing of our heads, is faulty. And its faults have a common root, a lack of intimacy between the soul and the historical process within which its fortune is made or lost.

The most widely current definition of our time is the result of the Ritschelian movement. Once more the conditions should be carefully noted. Philosophy in Germany has fallen from her high estate. Trendelenburg said jestingly, but with biting truth, that after Hegelianism had run its course, Germany resembled a man who had gone on a prolonged spree, and, waking up with a splitting headache, resolved to drink no more. This condition of philosophical thought is even more significant than the state of things to which Kant applied Ovid's lines on Hecuba in the Preface to the first edition of the *Critique*:

*Modo maxima rerum,
Tot generis natisque potens, . . . nunc trahor exul, inops.*

For now a rival interest has taken possession of consciousness. Science has become dominant. Metaphysical thought is quite out of fashion. So Kant's antithesis between natural necessity and moral freedom is more in place than in his own time. Tennyson's lines,

Are God and nature then at strife,
That nature lends such evil dreams?

have given to the modern situation enduring expression. Strauss, in the Introduction to his *Glaubenslehre*, described another aspect of the situation when he said that the controversy between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism had become a relatively unimportant thing, the supreme issue lying between the Christian view of life and science.

In vital connection with Ritschl's work stand the beginnings of that great movement which resulted in a united and triumphant Germany. Positive and practical things began to take hold of Teutonic consciousness with convincing power. Thanks to the political and the scientific cause together, the academic world of Kant and Hegel passed away. Furthermore, high philosophy passed out of Hegelianism into socialism. Feuerbach is a typical figure. Strauss travelled the same road. Socialism began the career which has ended in our own day in its practically supplanting the established Protestant faith in Germany. The total result is that idealizing thought is more and more driven out of metaphysics. The pride of philosophy is completely humbled. Abandoning Hegel's ground, she returns to the position of Kant's second Preface. If idealism is to be saved, it must be by another method than that of high speculation. Only through the practical, or moral, reason can the cause of idealism be secured.

A very interesting illustration is found in the new base for the doctrine of freedom. Kant had grounded it in thought, by means of the distinction between the empirically and the transcendently real. But Ritschl frankly abandons that ground. The sole sanction, he thinks, of the individual's freedom is the freedom of society, the enduring possibility of betterment. We build the

stronghold of our faith in the individual's freedom in the space lying between society as it is and society as it is to be (*Science and Metaphysics*, part 2, chap. 3). Whatever one may think about the permanent value of this position, there can be no doubt regarding its contemporary significance. The social ideal controls all things, even metaphysics.

Under these conditions Ritschelianism, harking back to Kant in philosophy and to Luther in religion, and staking everything on the possibility of freeing the religious consciousness from the interference and intrusion of metaphysics, forms its definition. From Schleiermacher it takes the conception of religion as that form of feeling which entirely transcends finite conditions; but it avoids his left-handed marriage with mysticism. Religion is a working conviction, supreme amongst the judgments of worth. By means of it man secures his position in the universe, maintains his freedom against the perilous siege of natural necessity, and insures his self-respect. Schleiermacher made much of the Biblical idea of the kingdom of God. Owing, however, to the other elements in his system, he could not do it full justice. In Ritschelianism it becomes the centre of a system. Religion is the form of feeling which secures a man in his conviction that human life as a whole can be moralized.

In a small way, our study of definitions proves the truth of the saying that the history of the world is the world's judgment-seat. For the last definition reached is the most comprehensive. It retains what is valuable in Kant's position without losing the vitalizing sense of personal religion which distinguishes Schleiermacher. Beyond question it comes from the very depths of personal and social need in our time. But its form of statement suffers from excessive contemporaneity. May not the essence of it be put in a way which shall smack less strongly of the philosophically trained modern?

There are other definitions more or less current in our day which are too highly specialized to detain us. For example, Max Müller defines religion as the sense of the Infinite. This will appeal to us in proportion to our poetical and philosophical culture. But it is too largely the birth of our own time to yield itself to a wide historical application. And our review of the inherited and

the modern definitions strengthens the belief that the hope of reaching a sound and comprehensive conception is bound up with a study of the religious consciousness when it is at work on a large scale. So alone can we keep clear of excessive emphasis on the mood of an individual or a generation. We must build our definition into the history of religion.

Marshall, in his *Principles of Economics* (vol. i, p. 1), says that "the two great forming agencies of the world have been the religious and the economic." The truth of his words is seen with great clearness in the founding of states. Civilization, understood in the deepest sense, is the power of co-operative labor—co-operation in terms of space, so that large masses of men are trained to work and to fight as a unit; co-operation in terms of time, the building of a continuous memory, so that an increasing purpose is apprehended and appropriated by successive generations. The problem of early civilization is in part the successful transition to artificial food-production on a large scale and to the means of defence whereby a settled agricultural population maintains itself against attack. And, in equal measure, the problem is to maintain friendly relations with the unseen forces and powers which beset human intelligence and purpose more and more insistently as consciousness deepens and the range of activity is increased. The economic and the religious agencies are, in the long run, inseparable. Working together, they founded and shaped ancient civilization.

We may take Chaldaea as a typical case and Babylon—one of the four cities that have most deeply affected the mind and the manners of men—as a typical path-making community. The cultus, or worship, is the life-blood of the state; under one form it manifests itself as primitive prayer, prayer being inseparable from magic. There are certain fixed forms of words which, when joined to certain symbolical actions, grasp and hold fast the invisible agencies of the world, and thus insure to human purpose a right of way through the unseen portions of the universe. Under another form the cultus manifests itself as sacrifice. The psychological basis of sacrifice is found in the fact that by means of it man brings his strongest power of attention to bear upon the unknown forces that beset him. This stands out plainly in

the prerogative cases of the ancient cultus, such as Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, Mesha's sacrifice of his eldest son, and Epimenides' sacrifice of two noble young Athenians in order to cleanse and absolve the conscience of Athens. When in dire need and under well-nigh fatal strain, man devoted his most precious possession to the invisible powers. His sacrifice is an act of piercing attention to the unseen world. And through the prodigious exercise of will a response to human need is wrung from the resources of that world.

Under another form the cultus manifests itself as the common feast. Robertson Smith has proved in a masterly way that this is profoundly characteristic of the higher forms of tribal communities. Hearne in his *Aryan Household*, Fustel de Coulanges in *The Ancient City*, and Maine in *Ancient Law* together prove that it perpetuated itself in many ways long after a number of tribal communities had merged into a real state. Through the common meal or festival and the joyous uprush of common feeling to which it gave rise, men were strengthened in their consciousness of collective power. At the same time their sense of solidarity with the unseen powers was proportionately deepened. Thus, to use a formula in favor with those ancient folk, they "quieted the heart." Out of this situation sprang that primitive conception of the covenant between God and man which is one of the fundamental ideas of the race and which asserts its influence clear through the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. And it was an unhappy chance in the history of words that gave us "Testament" instead of "Covenant" as the name for our Bible.

Finally, the cultus discloses its power by conferring insight into the unknown. The system of augury which draws out of omens of many kinds a convincing knowledge of impending things is in full evidence at this point. And in closest connection with it, though far higher in moral range and mental promise, is the astrology by means of which man enabled himself to read confidently the book of the future in the light of the "secret influence" of the stars.

Through all these causes in co-operation, hallowed by immemorial usage, beaten by rigid custom into an incongruous yet sacramental unity, man attained his first working hypothesis

regarding an authoritative disclosure of the ultimate force or will. And thus he solved for a time that most difficult of all problems, the problem of law.

From Babylon, regarded as a typical city, we may derive certain features or characteristics of religion when it is laboring on the most heroic of human tasks, the founding and grounding of society. Advanced civilization, with its highly developed specializations of function, conceals or slurs over some things which here lie in plain sight. To the student of the beginnings of civilization it is quite clear that religion is to be viewed as the supreme form of self-assertion on man's part. The underlying reason for the connection between the economic and the religious forces of history lies in the fact that they constitute the supreme form of the struggle for existence. As civilization advances and character deepens, the struggle is waged on higher levels. But always and everywhere it is one and the same battle. Through religion man asserts himself in the face and even in the teeth of adverse circumstances, asserts himself with self-convincing power, maintains his dignity and pride and so insures his efficiency.

The method through which this self-assertion and this self-insurance are wrought out is, on the social side, deepening common feeling. Religion here manifests itself as the final form of common consciousness. In our own time there are other forms of common feeling, such as fervid patriotism and social sympathy, which seem to put themselves forward as rivals of religious feeling. But a thorough analysis shows that a religious element is hidden within them, and that it is due to temporary conditions and causes that this implicitly religious equality of deep and wide common consciousness does not become explicit.

On the side of the cultus or system of public and private worship, the method is a symbolical and sacramental connection with the unseen world. The primitive sacrament takes on many forms. But in every one of them, just as plainly as in the most refined and spiritualized conception of the Lord's Supper, the object aimed at—and attained, if the sacrament be sacramentally apprehended—is the solidarity between the seen and the unseen parts of an indivisible universe.

It is a single indivisible world with which antiquity deals.

The familiar saying that there is no supernatural in Homer applies to the whole field of antiquity. There is no supernatural because there is no scientific conception of nature. Our terminology relating to the supernatural has grown out of the alliance between the Bible on the one hand and a philosophy and science on the other which in their origin and early stages of development came from a source wholly outside the Bible. Antiquity had an indivisible universe to deal with. There was no supernatural—but there was an over-world fully as real as the visible world. And with this over-world religion put man on terms of intimacy. The wider the view of life, the more largely was this over-world conceived, and the greater became the range and steadiness of motive. On the low level of fetichism human motive is narrow in its range. When states are founded, the range is vastly widened, and at the same time the personal and social will gain proportionately in steadiness. But the end of religion remains the same. It is man's final and fundamental act of self-assertion in terms of the unseen and unknown realities into which he peers with hope and dread. The religious method is social on the one side and on the other sacramental. The result in terms of emotion is the certainty of strengthening, saving connection with forces mightier than man. And sympathetic insight into these forces—practical confidence in their eventual workings—is the ultimate aim.

These characteristics of religion take on diverse forms when the religious consciousness advances to problems far removed from the bread-and-butter questions and the club-law of primitive social order. But the diversity of form does not alter the identity of purpose. The decisive change is effected when soul and body are clearly distinguished in thought, and when, later on, the soul succeeds in claiming for itself a kind of reality superior to the reality of the body. India takes the place of Babylon as the typical or prerogative case. Now the most significant fact in the religious history of India is that political relationship and political responsibility did not succeed in imposing themselves on the deepest religious consciousness as matters of primary religious obligation. The saintly soul, with a logic of consummate precision and beauty, thinks away, or volatilizes, the reality

of that order of things within which the state lives and moves and has its being. An intense and compelling "otherworldliness" becomes the order of the day.

This gives us another note of ancient religion. When civilization has gone so far that for a certain number of men the pressure of practical problems either ceases altogether or perceptibly lightens, and when, standing foot-loose towards many forms of obligation which held all men in the earlier days with an iron grip, these privileged men go deep into their own natures in search of some easement beneath "the heavy and the weary weight" of an "unintelligible world," they inevitably become "otherworldly." Their otherworldliness may take the form of the Buddhist nirvana or the heaven of the mediaeval saint. But the aim is one. All religions that have gone any considerable distance beyond the tribal polity and the tribal theology have pursued it. The real world is taken to be vastly larger than the world that is seen. And in this unseen yet real order of things the interests of the soul are invested.

Still, though the methods whereby the soul seeks its ends may differ widely from the methods of primitive religion, the result is the same—namely, successful self-assertion against the discounts and belittlings of unkindly circumstances and contemptuous death. Moreover, while methods differ, at bottom there is an identity in method. It consists in establishing a sympathetic relationship between the known and the unknown, between the facts of reality open to every-day experience and the reality outlying and inaccessible, so that the mind discovers an asylum where fear cannot touch it, and finds, in the heart of agitation, an abiding peace.

The religious experience of Israel, as recorded in the Old Testament, has a unique value, and for three reasons. First, because we have here a kind of religion that moves towards universalism not, as in India, by invalidating the historical life of the race, but by imposing on history a moral purpose and prescribing for it a moral end. Secondly, because the individual, while acquiring a deeper and deeper knowledge of himself and setting on the individual life an ever-increasing value, keeps himself in close contact with the common consciousness of his nation. Thirdly,

because the Old Testament, while on the surface it is a book of mediation and compromise and fuses the genius of primitive Semitic religion with the genius of Prophetism, has in its deepest being a logic of life which demands the Christian interpretation of history.

The prophet, building on the foundations common to the Semites, shaped a new form of idealism. His supreme good is in the most intimate connection with the destiny of his nation. The unity of God and the unity of Israel, the eternal being of God and the indestructibility of Israel, are for him correlative conceptions. He does not, as did Aristotle, put history aside as a badly conducted drama. The divine unity with him is not a matter to be apprehended only by severe and continuous thinking. History is viewed as a moral drama moving steadily towards a divine conclusion, and through its turns and issues the being and will of God are revealed. Still less does the prophet, like the Hindu idealist, cashier the political and social will in order to save his soul. The nation's existence and will has so tough a fibre, and he partakes of it so deeply, that his otherworldliness never becomes the otherworldliness of the saintly ascetic. On the contrary, it takes the form of the messianic hope, the impassioned and noble, though narrow, belief in the future of his people.

The prophet takes the primitive religion of the Semites and moralizes it, shifting the centre of gravity from levitical custom and sacrifice to the keeping of the heart. But to the aim of that religion he holds himself true. Taking the primitive conception of a covenant between God and man, he purifies it so that Israel is not thought of as part and parcel of nature, drifting with circumstance, but becomes God's free creation. God is exalted high above circumstances, above the entire frame of nature. And the divine resources are pledged to Israel's preservation. For primitive magic and primitive astronomy the prophet substitutes confidence in the moral character of God. The wizard, the soothsayer, the astrologer, shall have no part in his polity. In their stead comes a deep self-consciousness, within which the unknown powers and forces of nature reveal themselves as the personal will of the God who stakes his very being on Israel's perfecting.

God in his holiness, in his exaltation above nature and history, is the ground and pledge of the high calling of the nation and the individual. In direct proportion to the consciousness of the divine holiness stands the seriousness with which the fact of evil is apprehended. Over against the polity of the true Israel—that is, God’s plan for humanity—stands the world, a vast bulk of moral indifference, moral indolence, and downright opposition to the will of God and the well-being of the nation. Between things as they are and things as they ought to be is a gulf so deep and wide that to all appearances it cannot be bridged. But faith in God and in man’s capacity to apprehend and obey God bridges the gulf. There is nothing truly real save God’s plan for history. By faith man makes that plan his very own. God’s will becomes the prophet’s own will. He makes the final and supreme act of self-assertion.

Here begins the historical career of our master-word, faith. It has its roots in the soil of lower religions. It inherits the task undertaken by the primitive cultus or ritual. But where ritual fails, faith succeeds. The ritual asserts the solidarity between the seen and unseen worlds in language that the eye can take in, and thereby robs the unknown of its terrors. Faith does the same thing, but after the cultus has reached the limit of its power, after the inner life has asserted and won its rights, after universal history has, so far as all appearances go, vetoed the possibility of national success. Then, refusing to turn aside from the highway of history in order to go off into a monastic retreat, the prophet, his consciousness flushed with the invasive energy of God, his eyes seeing in the crisis of history the promise and potency of divine presence and power, triumphantly asserts and affirms himself. “Faith,” Renouvier happily says, “is but the self” (*Psychologie rationnelle*, iii, p. 80). But it is self in the widest and deepest sense, the self that includes the nation and reaches down to the base and bottom of the moral law. Through a supreme act of will and of self-assertion man rises to a hope “that can create from its own wreck the thing it contemplates.”

The great value of the New Testament as a book of witness to the nature of religion is due to two causes. One is the fact that it is the literary by-product of the supreme religious revolution.

The self-conscious literary element is found in it, for example, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But, taken as a whole, it is extraordinarily free from the literary motive. The other cause is its inseparable connection with the Old Testament. It is not a book of mysticism; like the Old Testament itself it is beaten out on the anvil of history. Furthermore, it is a literature produced by a practical and social, not by an academic and speculative, movement. For example, the letters of Paul are drawn from him by crises in the development of the Pauline churches, the literary and speculative impulses are not main causes in his literary activity. Hence the New Testament stands very close to the building of community. To a peculiar degree it is instinct with common feeling and consciousness.

The New Testament, on the external side, carries the logic of prophetism over into explicit universalism. On the internal side it completes the transition from sacrifice to prayer as a method of self-expression. Psychologically considered, prayer is the deepest and intensest form of purpose. It is the will of man hewing his way into the unknown. Hence the connection between prayer and revelation. The divine will meets the high-wrought human will and, opening itself to need, lays bare the secret of self-renewing life. The prayer of the poor, that is, of the consciousness which on the one hand is deeply aware of dire need and on the other hand is dominated by the highest purpose—the prayer of the poor pierces the clouds. The very heart, the fundamental meaning, of the universe imparts itself to the heart of man.

In the thought of revelation we come upon the final note of religion as it discloses itself, when it is doing, in co-operation with economic forces, the world's primary work of grounding and developing the social consciousness. Revelation is the sense of an invasive and pervading energy coming from the deepest source of being. By reason of this energy, which flushes the veins with joyous feeling and imparts to consciousness a radiant certainty of intimacy with the unseen Power, the torment of the unknown is forever allayed, and the problem is solved. What reason and culture cannot do, namely, maintain the unity of life under the strain of increasing difficulty, is triumphantly achieved. Human being and fundamental being are made one.

A necessary consequence is that primary religious experience is accompanied by the consciousness of mystery. What is called common sense deals only with the things that are simple and clear. Vital religion breaks in upon the clear with the consciousness of the infinite. A man's feet are set in a large room. His experiences become spacious, his soul an inlet of divine reality. His reason either ripens or swoons into revelation. Common sense finds itself either allied to the mystical or besieged by it.

It is in connection with revelation as the final characteristic of religion that the idea of God as a personal being comes into full play. The personality of God is the only successful way of vitalizing the entire revealableness of the unseen powers. As individuality strikes its roots deeper while its purpose ranges farther out, as responsibility widens and burdens greaten, two paths are open to the foot. The man who has become greatly individual, in order to attain the satisfaction of his spiritual needs, may go off with the Hindu mystic, and, leaving the social and political order of things to take care of themselves, he may seek his own perfection. Or else, standing fast in his place and duties as a citizen of the visible world, he surrenders himself to a belief in the divine personality. A philosophical, or abstract, conception of ultimate being cannot serve his needs; for pure speculation invariably brings up in the thought of absolute reality as transcending the relations of human consciousness. The one and sole efficient help is found in the fact, or the fancy, of complete revelation. God is a person. His entire being comes into intimate relations with the being of man. The unseen world is found to be, or fancied to be, in perfect sympathy with outreaching and upreaching individuality. The personality of God pledges the resources of the unseen universe to man's attainment of virtue and happiness. The essential nature of religion lies in its authentication of reality. The ultimate, the final, meanings and values are brought within man's reach. "*Inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.*" There is the gist of it in a nutshell.

Through the Old Testament the New Testament is kept in vital connection with the religions of antiquity and so fulfils their logic. This may be illustrated by its master-words, the correlative terms "faith" and "kingdom of God." The Book of Deuter-

onomy and the First Epistle of John, read together, will make the point clear. Faith is man's final act of self-assertion. It takes for granted a deep and clear self-consciousness. Only the mature individual can enter deeply into its meaning. But the individual by himself is not the unit of thought and feeling. Faith knows the individual only where he truly knows and finds himself, in the fellowship of his peers. Faith and the kingdom of God are inseparable parts of a single concept. Faith is the final assent, assent to a belief in the perfectibility of man as bottomed on and built upon the being and will of God or the inmost essence and reality of things. It is the strongest form of will; for by means of it a man grips a far distant end of personal and social action. He knows himself and masters himself only in the depth of fellowship. And in that self-same deep of fellowship God reveals Himself, and so overcomes the terrors of the unknown. Not on the mountain-top of the speculator nor in the cell of the monastic saint is given the beatific vision that restores integrity to consciousness, but in the heart of the community. One with his fellows, man feels his oneness with the ultimate will and force. Fear is cast out. The working will, afire with love and aglow with hope, faces the world with unfaltering and unconquerable confidence.

We have run through the history of religions in the period when religion did its most difficult work, when it helped to create states and make civilization possible and at last founded the Christian church—the most comprehensive form of social consciousness, the society that contains the largest store of idealizing energy and the most efficient body of high and penetrating motives. If we compare this work of religion in antiquity with religion in Germany, from which land all the modern definitions of religion have come, we cannot but see a striking difference. In the contemporary situation the field of experience is spaced off and divided. Science has one function and metaphysics another. The state and the church, each deeply self-conscious, are distinct and practically separated. The unit of thought and feeling is the individual, who studies religion from the side of his own need, and who, having gained a clear conception of religion that answers to his needs, then proceeds to include his neighbor within his defini-

tion. He is pretty sure to be strongly influenced by the personal equation of his generation or even of his circle. But we are beginning to suspect that in the deep of the unknown future towards which the economic and social movement, with or without our will, is carrying us, there is hidden a larger and more vitalizing conception of religion. Meantime, in order to guard ourselves against ourselves, we have undertaken to draw a definition from the history of religion taken as a whole.

We have seen that religion is the supreme form of self-assertion on man's part. He begins his career in a state of mind where God and nature are one. As he grows into clear self-consciousness, "God" becomes distinct from "nature." In the wide field of pantheistic monotheism, indeed, the distinction does not advance beyond the Stoic doctrine of the *anima mundi*. But in the narrow field of prophetic monotheism, by reason of the fact that the moral task of humanity is more seriously taken, God is exalted high above nature, and nature becomes the plastic material under his hand, being shaped toward a moral end and consummation of history. We have seen, however, that under all its ancient forms the method of religion is unvarying, namely, a sacramental manifestation of solidarity between the seen and the unseen parts of an indivisible universe. From the lowest forms to the highest there runs a continuous consciousness. We have seen, also, that the aim is everywhere the same, to overcome man's dread and terror of the unknown. Heartease amidst the torturing insecurities and uncertainties of life is the end desired. Religion brings the anxious heart of man to this end by bestowing on him the peace of the universe. The religious imagination makes life wide and spacious. Fear vanishes. The lion and the lamb lie down together. A little child shepherds the wild beasts of the earth. And, finally, we have learned that religion, when doing its hardest and most heroic work, takes on the form of a profound common feeling and consciousness.

Thus equipped, we take on ourselves the risk of a definition—perhaps it would be more safe to say, a description. Religion is that form of common consciousness through which the friendly relationship between the seen and the unseen, between human consciousness and purpose on the one side and the higher powers

and deepest tendencies on the other, is authoritatively disclosed and assented to. The unvarying quality of this consciousness is a sense of finality. Illusion and error are a necessary part of religious feeling. But the illusion and the error are held within a larger process, illusion breaking only to uncover a surer reality, and error, when it is detected, becoming a door opened into wider truth; so that the sense of finality, checked and chastened, goes from strength to strength. The known and the unknown are felt to be parts of a single and unbroken context of meaning and value.

The enduring as well as the immediate result is an assured sense of security in the possession of one's higher wealth. This sense of security is the fundamental value of life. From it, in the last analysis, all other values draw their sap and juice. It is in this way that religion has made itself the foster-parent of civilization, and that law, in the twofold sense of obligation and security in the possession of rights, has found in it a powerful ally. And here is the pith and marrow of religion. From time to time imperious needs and situations give it one or another color, and so conceptions and definitions more or less specialized come to light. But every one of them, when hard pressed, takes refuge in the larger, if vaguer, conception of a friendly relation with the unseen forces and tendencies, greater than man, which are bearing nature and history onward.

It is a matter of course that many shades and varieties of feeling and motive should blend with the religious consciousness when once its primary character is understood. Things which by nature are secondary are caught up by the religious feeling, and so completely incorporated with it that they seem to be an organic part of religion itself. Indeed, they may actually become necessary to religion as a working force. And so various shades of religious feeling come into being. But the pith of the thing is the sense of security created by the consciousness of union with the unseen powers. The relation between this primary element and the secondary elements which intertwine with it is happily illustrated by the relation between the primary and secondary elements in the total impression made on us by the highest order of beauty. Thus into one's consciousness of the incomparable

beauty of the Yellowstone Cañon there inevitably comes the thought of the vast period of geological time that has gone to its making, and the effect of its sublime loveliness is thereby enhanced. Or again, into the deep pleasure given by the beauty of a great wheat-field in the North-west may come the thought of the large uses into which the grain shall pass. But the primary thing is the beauty itself. So it is with the religious consciousness. It changes color with changing situations. Its essential character, however, is a joyous, radiant confidence in the nature and constitution of the unseen universe.

Naturally, religion purifies itself as the mental objects of man multiply in number and increase in range. It is a long march from the early tribal period, when the food-question was always pressing and the most real things were the things immediately at hand, to our scientific age with its immense range of disinterested knowledge and its splendid ability to realize distant ends. Science, therefore, is bound to affect, in increasing measure, the color and complexion of the religious motive. But the essential nature of religion is unchanging. In truth, the practical and the theoretical aspects of science, taken together, bring out in the clearest light the old truths. For, on the practical side, science has made possible, through inventions, the vast nation of modern times and has imparted to it an irresistible tendency towards democracy. Now democracy involves a tremendous increase in the seriousness of the moral task of humanity. A great mass of people who in ancient days would have had no standing within the mind of the idealist in our time possess both collective and individual significance. Consequently, the labor of moralizing the community is very much greater for the modern idealist than it was for Plato. Plato, with perfect rectitude, could wipe the masses off the slate. Their one function was to be governed. But in a modern democracy the supreme function of the same class of people is to govern themselves. The task of lifting them to the level of self-government immensely increases the strain upon the collective moral purpose which is the source of true law within the community. But that moral purpose must find its stronghold in a growing body of advanced individuals, and these individuals, gladly dooming themselves to entire responsibility

for the common welfare, will be irresistibly driven into conscious relations with the deepest forces and tendencies of the universe. And the law of life becomes, in their experience, a constantly repeated act of faith in the universe or God on the one side and in their nation and race on the other. And since this act of faith is made necessary by the terrific contrast between things as they are and things as they ought to be, science itself on its practical side brings into clear light the motive of religion.

Again, on the theoretical side also the same thing appears. The scientific conception of the universe leaves no nook or corner for the ancient notion about the terrors of nature to take refuge in. Law dominates the whole sweep of things. Yet law itself seems to give rise to an even deadlier terror. Does it not shut out freedom? does it not pour contempt on man's pride? Only in appearance. For the progress of science is irrevocably wedded to the fortunes of the free state. The universe must be thought or felt to guarantee the increasing well-being of man. And this thought and feeling are essentially religious. They quite transcend verifiable experience. They necessitate, and they rest upon, a supreme act of faith—faith in the inner constitution of the universe and faith in man's kinship to it. Our majestic conception of the universe drives us into the conviction that the deepest meanings and powers are on the side of the highest human purpose. By means of that conviction we make our peace with the stones of the field and with an apparently merciless and unpitying nature. A sense of security in our struggle for the rights of mankind pervades and possesses us. Now this is the pith and marrow of religious feeling. So the definition, or description, of religion taken from antiquity suits our needs and conditions fairly well. Religion, as a matter of feeling and thought, is for us the consciousness of intimate and friendly relations with the unseen powers and tendencies of the universe. As a matter of will, it is an assured confidence regarding the moral quality and the moral end of history. The life of the nation and the life of the race are worthy of hearty participation on the part of the choicest spirits, because through religion the heart of things, called God, enters into an enduring connection or covenant with the heart of man.